



# The Black's Fort Messenger

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 11

OCT, NOV, DEC 2007

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## Music at the Market

Abingdon hosted its first *Harvest Festival* at the new Abingdon Farmers Market Pavilion on Remsburg Drive, Friday, September 21, 2007. Mayor Lois Humphreys, Town Manager Greg Kelly, the Abingdon Town Council and other local officials held a ribbon cutting to kick off the event and officially open the Town's new venue.

Bristol, TN native, Charlie Allen, best known for his country ballads opened the evening. One fan favorite was *That was then, This is Now*. Abingdon native Brock Hawkins, who is currently recording in Nashville, sang *That's Why God Made Erasers*, a song Charlie wrote about Brock's daughter Abbie. Grammy award nominees, Blue Highway rounded out the night with their well know bluegrass favorites such as *Lonesome Pine*, *It's a Long, Long Road*, and *The Rounder*.

A *Taste of Town* was hosted by participating Abingdon restaurants creating selective recipes using local farm produce. Farmers were well represented by vendors selling fresh produce throughout the evening.

Bill Smith, Director of The Crooked Road, Virginia's Heritage Music Trail, was the master of ceremonies for the event. Bill was extremely pleased at the turnout, as was Town Manager Greg Kelly, who estimated the crowd to be between 1500 and 2000 people. Not bad, considering Abingdon High School had a home football game, a 51-6 victory over the Tazewell Bulldogs. According to Kelly, "there was magic in the air".

The Town wishes to thank Clifton-Stewart for their hard work in making the pavilion a reality!



PHOTOS: (Above left) Brock Hawkins, with daughter Abbie, sings while country music's Charlie Allen accompanies. (Above right) The official ribbon cutting. (Above middle) The crowd arrived early in anticipation of the Harvest Festival Music. (Below right) Blue Highway spotlights



## From the Corner Office



Greetings Citizens!

Things are certainly abuzz these days in Abingdon. I hope you have noticed all that has been developing and have been as pleased as I have. I continue to enjoy meeting with you, the public, and hearing your comments. Your voice is important to our future plans.

Since our last issue, we have officially kicked off our designation as a **Virginia Main Street Community**, which will hopefully provide a tremendous boost toward revitalizing our downtown merchant area. Be on the look-out for our new signs that reflect this designation. They will soon appear at our entrance corridors. Now the hard work begins for our merchants as they educate themselves and begin implementing the policies and practices of a Virginia Main Street Community. Keep your eyes and ears open for upcoming Main Street events.

Also, we have now officially cut the ribbon on the Town's newest jewel, **The Farmers Market and Community Pavilion**. It has now been tested and has proven very successful as both a farmers market and concert venue. To borrow a phrase from the movie, *Field of Dreams*, **"build it and they will come"**. I foresee a very successful farmers market for many years to come----**so here's to the Salt of the Earth**. Also, believe me when I say, **more music is on its way!**

We have also significantly upgraded and enhanced the Town's web-site, so please take a look. I think you will find it to be much more user friendly, informative and easy to navigate.

With the end of this month, comes my one year anniversary as your Town Manager. It is definitely true what they say----**"time flies when you're having fun."** I hope everyone has found the past year to be as fun and rewarding as I have. To be able to say you are having fun in a job like this speaks volumes to you, the citizens of Abingdon---**Many thanks!** Also, I would be remiss if I didn't say--Hats off to a great staff that works extremely hard to keep the Town running and looking good. It's always the people on the back lines who make the people up front look so good---**Thanks guys!** And last but not least, many thanks to a great Town Council who create the policies and authorize the funding to make all of the good things happen. I have found each member to be quite different from the other in their respective political philosophies and ideologies---an eclectic bunch, if you will, which is precisely what the heart and soul of Abingdon is all about. As eclectic as they may be, they all share one common interest, as do I, and that is the love and prosperity of our Town.

In conclusion, let me say without hesitation, we're experiencing good times and we're in good hands. I remain optimistic that the best is still yet to come, so hang on and keep a watchful eye. Until next time, the corner office is always open.

Sincerely,

## What's In A Name? (cont'd)

### PART 2

When we last left off, we had explained the origins of Abingdon's original names, Wolf Hills and Black's Fort and its incorporation.

Colonel Arthur Campbell, who was responsible for the Act of incorporation being passed, suggested the name given the town. It is certainly believed that Abingdon was known as such prior to the incorporation.

Tradition says that it was given as a compliment to Martha Washington, the wife of George Washington. Abingdon was the name of the parish in which she worshipped as a girl, just a few miles from Mt. Vernon. However, in L.P. Summers' History of Southwest Virginia and Washington County, two more suggestions are given. The first, that the town was named in honor of Lord Abingdon, a young English nobleman of Scot descent and close acquaintance of General William Campbell. Lord Abingdon was sympathetic to the quest for independence his Scot kinfolk had undertaken in their war with England. The second, and quite possibly the most believable, takes us back to Daniel Boone again. Abington (yes, with a 't'), Pennsylvania, located about 12 miles north of Philadelphia, was his families first home in the New World. Arthur Campbell and Daniel Boone were acquaintances and no doubt, Boone's early travels through the area were probably legendary in his own time.

So where does 'Abingdon' come from? Again, the traditions vary, but the answer lies "across the pond."

(Cont'd, p. 5)

## People You Should Know

### Vice-Mayor



#### Robert "Bob" Howard

Bob Howard was born and raised in Abingdon, as a matter of fact, with the exception of his days at Clinch Valley College (now UVA-Wise) and a short stay in Johnson City, TN, he has lived on Valley Street his entire life. Vice-Mayor Howard is in his 6<sup>th</sup> term on Town Council and has spent some 36 years as an active member of the Abingdon Volunteer Fire Department. After 12 years of employment with Highlands Union Bank, founded and headquartered in Abingdon, he is now the Vice President of Facilities Management and Security. The Vice-Mayor enjoys baseball, his favorite team being the Cincinnati Reds, and college football. He is an active member of the Abingdon United Methodist Church and relishes his time with his MG-B convertible, in nice weather, of course. Today, he can still be found on Valley Street, where he resides with his wife Susan of 11 years.

### Town Clerk

#### Cecile Rosenbaum

Birthplace: Johnston Memorial Hospital, Abingdon, VA  
Grew up in Marion, Virginia

Education: Marion Senior High School  
B.A., Paralegal Studies, Virginia Intermont College

Years of Service: Washington County Attorney Legal Assistant/Human Resources- 5 years.  
Started working with Greg Kelly as Legal Assistant in March 2005.  
Town of Abingdon Clerk effective May 1, 2007.

Hobbies: Reading, Loves Animals, Likes to walk her dog on the Creeper Trail.

Family: Resides in Abingdon Virginia; Married 14 years to Chad Rosenbaum, one son (Chandler), two dogs and one cat.

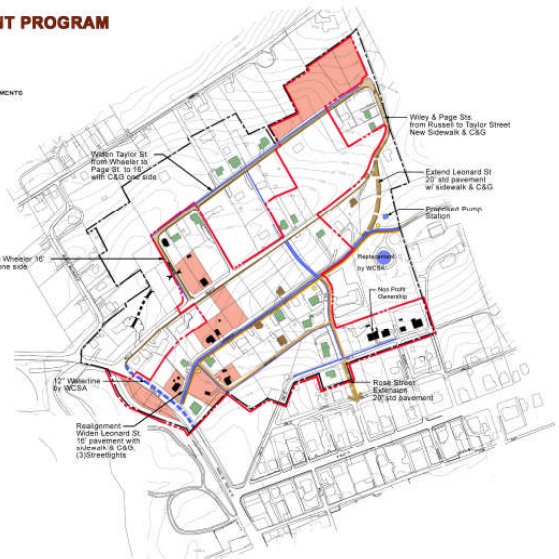
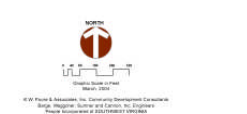
Description of Job Duty: Clerk to Town of Abingdon Council  
Administrative Assistant to Town Manager  
Keeper of the Town of Abingdon Seal  
Organization Monthly Council Meeting  
Council Agendas and Council Meeting Minutes





# Community Redevelopment Project Begins

The Taylor's Hill neighborhood (historically known as Fruit Hill) is in the process of receiving a makeover. The Town received a Community Development Block Grant in 2004 that allows for the widening and improvement of Leonard Street, as well as sidewalks, and improving the sewer and drainage systems as well as housing rehabilitation. In addition to the road widening, the Town was able to develop an extension of Leonard Street down to Wiley Street. The Town has partnered with People, Inc. who will perform all housing rehabs, Ken Construction out of Lebanon, VA for the road and infrastructure improvements and KW Poore & Associates out of Richmond who have been administering the grant.



Like the Kings Mountain CDBG project before, the residents of Taylor's Hill will see improvements to their neighborhood that are long overdue.

# A View From Across the Pond



*Mayor of Ock Street and  
Morris Dancers*

*Mayor Alison Rooke  
(2005-06); visited  
us, in October 2005.*



*Mayor Peter Green (2006-07) and Town Clerk Nigel Warner in traditional attire.*

*Abingdon, VA's own  
Cumbow China on dis-  
play in the Mayor's  
Chambers.*



About 50 miles northeast of London, along the Thames River, lies a small market town called Abingdon-on-Thames. Abingdon holds claim to the title of Britain's oldest town. As an organized unit, it was first established in the late Iron Age as an 'enclosed oppidum' or valley-fort (the opposite of a hillfort). The town's history is closely intertwined with that of its Abbey. Abingdon Abbey claimed to be the first monastery to be set up in Britain; a title strongly contested by Glastonbury. Not only is it claimed to be the first, but also one of the largest, possibly larger than West Minster in London.

One tradition holds that a man by the name of Abban is the origin...

Abban's background is disputed. Some say he was an Irish missionary, others that he was a secular Briton, the son of a wealthy consul at the Court of High-King Vortigern. Whatever his origins, he is said to have been present at Stonehenge during what was supposed to have been an Anglo-Briton Peace Conference around AD 456. In later years, the occasion became known as the "Night of the Long Knives" because the Saxons massacred all the British nobility gathered there. Abban was one of the few to escape alive. He fled North across the Wiltshire and Berkshire Downs, until he reached the relative safety of the upper Thames Valley. The slaughter he had witnessed so horrified him that Abban decided to settle there and devote his life to prayer.

In reality, Abban never existed. He was invented to explain the name of Abingdon. Abban's supposed Irish roots probably stem from the fact that there were two Irish saints of this name active two generations later.

Abingdon has an impressive Anglo-Saxon heritage. Some of the earliest Germanic settlers in Britain have been identified in an Abingdon cemetery. One group of male burials there seem to

have been deliberately set apart for at least two generations and, from their Frankish swords, it would appear that they were a warrior class. During King Alfred the Great's reign, the Abbey was burnt to the ground by the Danes from Reading, and there was a small skirmish outside the town. A superb Saxon sword from this period was found in the Thames at Abingdon. It has a silver covered

pommel decorated with foliage and leopard heads. Below, among fine interlace work are a man, an eagle, a lion and a cow: the symbols of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.



It's likely that the town took on the name Abbey-dun (-dun or -don being Celtic for "fort" or "settlement") and over the years, it evolved into Abingdon.

The abbey was the center of "life" in the tiny market town. To honor the poor, the monks held an annual "bun toss", where buns, much like hot-cross buns, were tossed from the abbey to the towns people below. This tradition is still continued but only on Royal occasions, such as the 450th Celebration of the Granting of the Town Charter in 2006 or when a member of the Royal Family marries.

At one time, the Abbey was so wealthy that land was purchased by the King to erect what would become the House of Parliament, along the Thames in London. This is honored today by the street which one finds in front of Parliament, Abingdon Street.

The two Abingdon's have kept a loose connection since the early 1950s. Since that time, there have been several town officials to visit Abingdon-on-Thames and in 2005, Mayor Alison Rooke visited Abingdon, VA. In June 2006, Mayor Humphries represented the Town of Abingdon at the 450th Charter Celebration and had the pleasure of attending the bun toss. Mayor Peter Green presented Mayor Humphries with a resolution, adopted by the Councillors of Abingdon and copy of the Abingdon-on-Thames Charter showing their commitment to improving our civic friendship. These can be seen in Town Hall.

As next year will mark our Abingdon's 230th Anniversary of Incorporation (the oldest English-speaking settlement west of the Blue Ridge Mtns.), the Town plans to hold celebrations throughout the year to commemorate this achievement. We hope our friends and counterparts from "across the pond" will join us.

So what's in a name? A lot of history.





## Town Plans For The Future of Its Past

The Town Council has appointed a committee to oversee the development of a master plan for the recently acquired muster grounds on Colonial Road. The committee has met to discuss the future of these hallowed grounds and will hold a 2-day workshop with Hills Studios, Landscape Architects and Planners out of Roanoke on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. This master plan is important, as it will assist the town in receiving funding through state and federal grant sources.



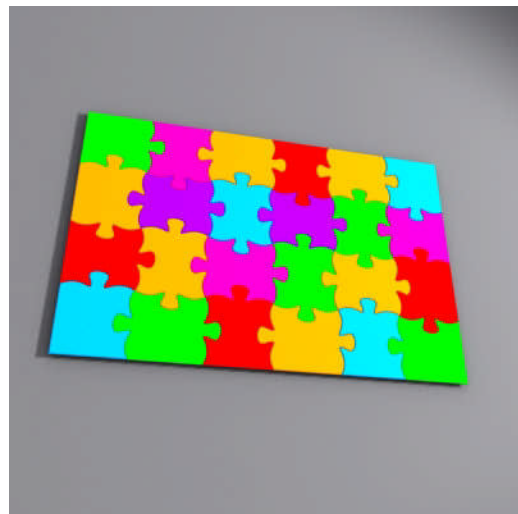
Overmountain Men reenact the March to Kings Mountain, September 2007.



## The Puzzle Pieces Are Together

The Town Council adopted the Abingdon 2027 Comprehensive Plan, as recommended by the Town Planning Commission, on August 27<sup>th</sup> in a joint public hearing with the Planning Commission. The newly adopted plan will assist the Town in future planning and development through the year 2027, though the Code of Virginia requires localities to review their plan every 5 years. Many thanks to Hill Studios and to you who attended the design charrettes and community workshops that helped us create a vision for the future of Abingdon.

The plan will be accessible on the Town website ([www.abingdon.com](http://www.abingdon.com)) by mid-October, and copies of the Abingdon 2027 Plan will be available on CD, at Town Hall for \$15.





## Down on Main Street



The Town of Abingdon received designation as a Virginia Main Street community in June, 2007. This event was celebrated with a reception at the Martha Washington Inn on September 10, where Greg Kelly, Town Manager, unveiled the official street sign that recognizes Abingdon's achievement. Those attending this event included the Abingdon Mayor and Town Council, Town Staff, Abingdon Main Street's Board of Directors, local merchants, and Virginia Main Street officials. The following day, an organizational kick-off event was held at the Small Business Incubator for town officials and the Board of Directors. The workshop outlined the services which the town will receive during its first year as a Main Street Community. Three members of Abingdon Main Street's board attended intensive training sessions in Radford, VA, on September 19 and 20 focusing on Design and Promotion, two of the Main Street program's four approaches to downtown revitalization. The board of directors is hard at work doing fund raising, organizing the four volunteer committees that will guide Abingdon's program and planning events for the first year. The first event, Abingdon's Fall Festival, will be held on Saturday, October 27<sup>th</sup>, and will include a sidewalk sale, a car show, a beer garden and chili cook-off, as well as activities for children. The afternoon event will be followed by Abingdon's annual Sleepy Hollow festivities.

## Overmountain Victory Trail Celebration

The Overmountain Victory Trail head again saw soldiers mustering in Abingdon, VA, just as they did 227 years ago. September 19-22 the Overmountain Victory Trail Celebration was held in Abingdon to celebrate our forefathers that marched from Washington County, VA to the Battle of Kings Mountain, SC in September 1780.



From Wednesday to Friday the grounds were filled with fourth grade students from Washington, Russell & Smyth Counties schools, as well as, Sullins Academy and St. Anne's Catholic School of Bristol, VA. The children learned about Colonial times, salt, soap and cartridge makings, playground of the past, listen to Colonial music and even heard a slave's perspective from that day and age.

Saturday the grounds were open to the public from 10am to 2pm. Approximately 200 people visited the different stations. There were dedication ceremonies held for the various remembrances of Retirement and the Mustering Grounds from 2pm to 4pm.

Rose Dunn and Paula & Mike Hoskins officially presented the key to *Retirement* to the Town of Abing-

don. Mayor Lois Humphreys and Greg Kelly accepted the key and presented both Rose and Paula plaques, acknowledging their efforts to preserve *Retirement* and the Muster Grounds for posterity.

The National Parks Service presented Mayor Humphreys & Greg Kelly with a certificate officially dedicating the Abingdon Muster Grounds as a portion of the Overmountain Victory Trail.

Alan Bowen, President of the Overmountain Victory Trail Association presented the Town of Abingdon with a check for \$10,000 to assist the Town in the purchase cost of the property and to show OVTA's support of the Town's efforts.



## Calendar of Events

### October

1	Town Council Meeting (Town Hall)	7:30pm
3	Board of Architectural Review (Town Hall)	5:00pm
8	Columbus Day (Offices Closed)	
9	Board of Zoning Appeals (Town Hall)	6:00pm
15	Tree Commission (Town Hall)	7:30pm
22	Planning Commission (Town Hall)	7:00pm
27	Sleepy Hollow Halloween Party (Remsburg Drive)	
31	Halloween	
31	EVA Board @ Johnston Memorial Hospital	12:30pm

### November

5	Town Council Meeting (Town Hall)	7:30pm
7	Board of Architectural Review (Town Hall)	5:00pm
9	Mistletoe Market (begins) (Higher Ed Center)	
11	Mistletoe Market (ends) (Higher Ed Center)	
12	Veterans Day Observed (Offices Closed)	
13	Board of Zoning Appeals (Town Hall)	6:00pm
16	Annual Kiwanis Christmas Parade (Main Street)	
16	Holiday Craft Fair (begins) (Coomes Center)	
18	Holiday Craft Fair (ends) (Coomes Center)	
19	Tree Commission (Town Hall)	7:30pm
22	Thanksgiving Day (Offices Closed)	
26	Planning Commission (Town Hall)	7:00pm
28	EVA Board @ Johnston Memorial Hospital	12:30pm

### December

3	Town Council Meeting (Town Hall)	7:30pm
5	Board of Architectural Review (Town Hall)	5:00pm
9	Christmas Tour of Homes (TBA)	
9	Community Christmas (Main Street)	
11	Board of Zoning Appeals (Town Hall)	6:00pm
11	Christmas Tree Lighting (Barter, Stage II)	
17	Tree Commission (Town Hall)	7:30pm
TBA	Planning Commission (Town Hall)	7:00pm
25	Christmas Day (Offices Closed)	
TBA	EVA Board @ Johnston Memorial Hospital	12:30pm

## Town of Abingdon

Office Hours: 8:30am-5:00pm Phone Number: (276) 628-3167

133 W. Main Street

P.O. Box 789

Abingdon VA 24212

Questions and Comments- [abingdonnews@abingdon.com](mailto:abingdonnews@abingdon.com)

## Administration

*Greg Kelly*.....**Town Manager**

*Mark Godbey*.....**Finance Director**

*Myra Cook*.....**Tourism Director**

*Garrett Jackson*.....**Town Planner**

*Marion Watts*.....**Building Inspection**

*Joey Burke*.....**Fire Chief**

*Cecile Rosenbaum*.....**Town Clerk**

*Tony Sullivan*.....**Police Chief**

*Floyd Bailey*.....**Information Technology**

*John Dew*.....**Public Works Director (Streets Division)**

*Jim Smith*.....**Public Works Director (Wastewater Division)**

*Chris Johnson*.....**Parks & Recreation**

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